

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please substitute the enclosed sheets 1/2 and 2/2, each labeled "Replacement Sheet", for the corresponding sheets presently in the case.

Figure 1 is amended to substitute reference numeral 30 (bolt) in place of incorrect reference numeral 32, which has been deleted.

Figure 3 is amended to add reference numeral 20 (load cell) as well as its associated lead line.

No new matter has been added.

REMARKS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1 through 4, inclusive, will be pending.

Claims 1 – 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by: (1.) “Fluid Load Cell Weight Classification Systems” (Research Disclosure document), and (2.) Document RD 415020A “Fluid Load Cell for Motor Vehicle Seat Weight Classification for Tailoring Airbag Deployment” and (3.) Document RD 415059A “Load Cell for Use in Vehicle Seat to Weight Occupant/Content to Provide Classification for Tailoring Airbag Deployment”.

Claim 1 has been amended to clearly distinguish the present invention from the art of record. Claim 1 now recites *“An apparatus for estimating the weight of an occupant of a vehicle seat including a seat cushion frame assembly having characteristic lateral width and longitudinal depth dimensions and supported by first and second laterally spaced floor brackets secured to a vehicle floor and extending upwardly therefrom to define upwardly facing mounting surfaces, the apparatus comprising: a load cell including first and second substantially planar rigid plates, and a fluid-filled bladder interposed between said first and second rigid plates, said first and second rigid plates and said fluid-filled bladder juxtaposed to register with and substantially dimensionally correspond laterally and longitudinally with said seat cushion frame assembly to effect distribution of the combined load weight of the vehicle seat and occupant; ... ”*.

No art of record discloses or suggests sandwiching a pressure sensing bladder between two large rigid plates which (1.) serve to distribute unit loading in the load cell corresponding to nearly the surface area of the seat cushion and/or (2.) elevates the load cell above the vehicle floor to provide open space thereunder while rendering the load

cell operation impervious to the presence of foreign objects providing an inadvertent load path to the floor.

Claims 2 – 4 depend from independent claim 1 and, thus, are distinguishable over the art for the reasons set forth above.

Furthermore, claim 4 has been amended to recite “*The apparatus ... wherein said non-compliant elements are bolts passing through adjacent registering apertures in said first and second rigid plates and fluid-filled bladder of said load cell.*”

No art of record discloses or suggests such load cell structure.

Accordingly, in view of the amendments, it is requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

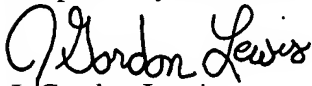
Conclusion

Applicants believe, in view of the amendments and remarks herein, that all grounds of rejection of the claims have been addressed and overcome, and that all claims are in condition for allowance.

If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication and/or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No.: 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Gordon Lewis

Reg. No. 28735

(248) 813-1234